

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 16, and it will be published in the *Federal Register* on January 21.

**Statement on Action on Title III of  
the Cuban Liberty and Democratic  
Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996**  
*January 16, 1998*

Today I am notifying the Congress of my decision to suspend for an additional 6 months the right of U.S. nationals to file suit against foreign firms trafficking in confiscated properties in Cuba. This decision is consistent with my strong commitment to implement the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act (LIBERTAD Act) in a way that best advances U.S. national interests and hastens a peaceful transition to democracy in Cuba.

I have taken this action to continue the effort we began in July 1996 to strengthen international cooperation in the effort to promote democracy in Cuba. I said last January and reaffirmed last July that I expected to continue suspending this provision of the LIBERTAD Act so long as our friends and allies continue their stepped-up efforts to promote a democratic transition in Cuba. I made this decision to take advantage of the growing realization throughout the world, in Europe and Latin America especially, that Cuba must change. We and our allies agree on the importance of promoting democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms in Cuba, and on the vital need for a peaceful transition to democracy on the island.

In the past 18 months, we have worked with our allies and friends to support concrete measures that promote peaceful change in Cuba. The international community is more united behind the cause of freedom in Cuba, and Fidel Castro is more isolated than ever before.

The European Union (EU) has reaffirmed its historic Common Position that, consistent with Europe's traditional democratic values, binds the 15 member nations to promote human rights and democracy in Cuba. The EU and its member states have strongly urged the Cuban Government to release imprisoned dissidents and stop the harassment

of those who seek peaceful democratic change. Recently, they have gone further and created an EU Working Group on Human Rights among their embassies in Havana. This will help coordinate the EU's human rights efforts in Cuba.

The international effort is not confined to Europe. Under Secretary of State Stuart Eizenstat made a trip to four Central American countries to energize their efforts to promote change in Cuba, with positive results. At the Ibero-American Summit in Venezuela in November 1997, leaders from Latin America and Europe made clear their position in favor of democracy and human rights. At the United Nations General Assembly in December, more countries than ever before co-sponsored the resolution supporting human rights in Cuba.

Nongovernmental organizations (NGO's) are increasing their support for dissidents on the island and maintaining international attention to repression in Cuba. The Dutch organization, Pax Christi, noting the historic and spiritual importance of the visit of the Pope this month, has continued its call for political change in Cuba. Amnesty International called on Cuba to release the four dissidents of the Dissident Working Group who were arrested in July.

Business groups have also been active in the effort. The Trans Atlantic Business Dialogue, composed of chief executive officers of leading European and U.S. corporations, called for businesses operating internationally to observe "best business practices" and to support human rights in international operations, including in Cuba. On January 7 in Washington, DC, the North American Committee of the National Policy Association sponsored a major conference on best business practices in Cuba. This committee includes over 100 representatives from business, labor, and the academic community in the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

As the multinational effort has moved forward, we have continued our vigorous implementation of title IV of the LIBERTAD Act, which denies entry to the U.S. of executives of firms that traffic in confiscated property in Cuba. Our implementation efforts have had a significant impact. Several companies

have withdrawn from commitments or altered their plans in Cuba in order to avoid determinations of trafficking. We will continue implementation of title IV as we work to conclude our negotiations with the EU on developing investment disciplines regarding confiscated property.

The U.S.-led international approach to promote democracy in Cuba must be preserved, expanded, and strengthened. We will continue working with our friends and allies to develop comprehensive, effective measures to promote democracy in Cuba.

**Letter to Congressional Leaders on Action on Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996**

*January 16, 1998*

*Dear Mr. Chairman:*

Pursuant to subsection 306(c)(2) of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-114), (the "Act"), I hereby determine and report to the Congress that suspension for 6 months beyond February 1, 1998, of the right to bring an action under title III of the Act is necessary to the national interests of the United States and will expedite a transition to democracy in Cuba.

Sincerely,

**William J. Clinton**

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Ted Stevens, chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, House Committee on International Relations; and Robert L. Livingston, chairman, House Committee on Appropriations.

**Proclamation 7064—Martin Luther King, Jr., Federal Holiday, 1998**

*January 16, 1998*

*By the President of the United States of America*

**A Proclamation**

America has been blessed with heroes throughout our history, men and women of

vision and courage who have set our feet firmly on the path of freedom and equality. Some became heroes by leading us in times of struggle; some by shaping our values and challenging us to greatness. And a few, like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., have done all this and more.

A thoughtful man and one of deep personal faith, his conscience called him into action for the soul of our Nation. He mobilized thousands of other brave and principled Americans—black and white, renowned and unknown—and began a crusade for justice that continues today. In sit-ins, marches, demonstrations, and boycotts, he and many others met violence with nonviolence and ignorance with determination. They awakened the conscience of our Nation and succeeded in winning passage of historic civil rights legislation: the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968. Pouring out his life in service, Dr. King made enormous and lasting contributions to improve the lives of millions of his fellow Americans.

Almost 35 years have passed since Dr. King challenged us from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial to live out the true meaning of our creed—that all men are created equal—and almost 30 years have passed since he was taken from us after an all-too-brief sojourn on this earth. A generation of young Americans has come of age without experiencing firsthand the power of his vision or the eloquence of his voice. Much has changed for the better in that time, but we still have much to do if we are to finish the work of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Following his example of service, we must build communities where everyone shares an equal opportunity for a good education and a good job, where our children can grow up without living in the shadow of guns, gangs, and drugs, and where we reject separation and isolation and instead celebrate together the blessing of our diversity. Last June, I established my initiative, "One America in the 21st Century," to encourage a national dialogue among Americans about race and to spur concerted action that will bring Americans together. We must put aside the bitter refrains of accusation and recrimination and instead discuss and implement new ideas for